

# The Pope's Message to America

## Pontiff Believes That This Country's Participation in the War Is Likely to Facilitate Approach of World Peace

By EDWARD MARSHALL.

THE article which follows is not a formal interview. Against that form of expression Pope Benedict XV. has achieved an unalterable prejudice. It is, however, the record of a friendly conversation of which His Holiness granted me the privilege in his study at the Vatican. Since I have written it it has been read and graciously approved as the result of my anxiety in no way to misinterpret His Holiness to the readers of this newspaper.

"There is one thing for which the whole world may pray with an unceasing earnestness," His Holiness said slowly. "That is for the speedy restoration of justice and brotherly love upon earth. Ever has injustice been the fruitful source of human misery. Out of the lessons of this war, this most incredible of all catastrophes which ever have beaten down humanity, surely it is not too much to hope that there may spring a new sense of a determination to do such justice as can come only through mutual understanding, nation to nation: such justice as in the past right thinking men have striven to do one to another.

"There is this about this war: it has brought to millions of men's minds the glory and necessity of sacrifice for an ideal. That is a good thing, if the ideal be unselfish, as usually is the case with those individuals who do the actual fighting in a war. Sacrifice is ever elevating.

"Those of your countrymen, as those of other nations who participate in the great combat with this as their animating impulse, thereby will gain. The preservation of this thought among your men who go to battle may make the war produce upon their souls that effect of spiritual elevation which will transform them into better men, and sacrifice among those who do not know the perils of direct combat but patriotically strive and watch and wait at home may have for them the same high value. Thus, possibly, the world may find, as it were, its recompense for all the horrors which have beset it and beset it now, for all the suffering and loss the war has brought.

"One thing it certainly has proved, it seems to me, through all the sacrifice and all the dreadful effort which it has demanded. To any reasonable mind, I think, it would seem that if now humanity can put forth such superhuman effort to make war, in days to come it must be capable of such endeavor as inevitably will maintain world peace. It may be that the sufferings of this war will lead mankind to ask itself the questions: Why should we strive and bleed and die in compassing destruction? Would it not be a better sacrifice if we laid down our lives in the service of our fellow men instead of in their ruin?"

"It has been by following this line of thought," His Holiness continued slowly, "that I have come



POPE BENEDICT XV.

**POPE BENEDICT XV.** has been an unceasing worker for peace from the moment that the war began. He has voiced his proposals for ending the conflict on four separate occasions—in January, 1915; March, 1916; May, 1916, and August, 1917. The latter document called forth the noteworthy reply from President Wilson as spokesman for the Allies on August 19 last.

to see the great necessity for imploring constantly that all humanity will join me in this mighty effort to make certain that out of the reaction from the vast disaster which has stunned the world may spring that newly earnest sense of fraternal sympathy which alone can bring all people and all peoples to complete fair mindedness, thus insuring tranquil days to come."

"Do you feel," I asked, "that the entrance of the United States into the war will serve the purpose of hastening or assuring that result?"

His Holiness sat for a moment with his gaze fixed upon papers on his unpretentious, carefully ordered desk, yet I was sure he did not see them. Then he raised his eyes and peered, again unseeingly, at the gray and weeping bit of sky shown through the window which, to me, revealed the dripping piazza of St. Peter and

beyond the hazy outline of the Alban Hills.

"Certainly I feel," he presently replied, speaking very slowly, "that America's participation in the great contest is likely to facilitate approach of such a peace as that which often I have mentioned as desirable—a peace which will bring with it confidence of full security to all the peoples of the world."

"Yours is a great country," His Holiness continued presently, now very definitely smiling as he looked at me. "It is a land in which intelligence has developed splendidly, and I believe its people are unselfish, generous, and to them, as the beginning of another of these solemn, darkly tragic years approaches, I am most earnest in good wishes. That the New Year for the United States may bring with it the restoration of that happiness of which, with nearly all the other nations of the world, it has been deprived by the vast conflict certainly is my very earnest wish, the more so as in the expression of this wish for the restoration of tranquillity to the United States I automatically must include expression of the wish for its return to all the disturbed populations of the earth."

His Holiness is very interested in America, her people and the psychology of her aims in the great war. After his expression of his New Year wish he made some comment on the high intelligence of the American newspaper.

"In America," said he, smiling very winningly, "journalism has become a mighty power. Probably it is a greater power there than elsewhere. You must feel it a high privilege to address the people of your country every week through their great newspapers." Again he paused and turned his face to look out of the window thoughtfully. "The American newspaper," he presently went on, "is a pulpit from which greater congregations can be reached, perhaps, than from any other in the world. If all the preachers who address your people from these pulpits while the war lasts shall preach to them the sermon that out of the great conflict real justice based upon full mutual understanding must be brought about, then may they achieve a service for humanity beyond the power of human computation."

In conclusion, as my audience came to an end, the Pope said thoughtfully:

"I feel myself impelled to-day to express my sympathy and admiration for all those who have shown and who are showing now their willingness to suffer the supreme sacrifice for their love of country, whichever country theirs may be; but at the same time it unquestionably is my duty to implore them to keep ever in their minds remembrance of the fact that true patriotism must be founded on divine law, and that no man can be loyal to his country unless he first be loyal to his conscience and his God."